

Decision 20-04-033 April 16, 2020

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking to
Implement Electric Utility Wildfire
Mitigation Plans Pursuant to Senate
Bill 901 (2018).

Rulemaking 18-10-007

ORDER EXTENDING STATUTORY DEADLINE

Summary

Prevention of catastrophic wildfire in California is a key goal of this Commission. This proceeding was opened to review the 2019 Wildfire Mitigation Plans of Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, as well as several small regulated electric utilities and independent transmission owners.

The Commission's new Wildfire Safety Division is reviewing the 2020 Wildfire Mitigation Plans, but in a decision issued in this proceeding on March 12, 2020, Decision 20-03-004, the Commission outlined several issues that should be resolved in this proceeding for the 2020 wildfire season. Those issues include implementing community outreach before, during and after wildfire, including outreach in-language; consideration of input from the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board due later this year; and decision-making on metrics to assess the effectiveness of the electrical corporations' wildfire mitigation.

Therefore, this decision extends the statutory deadline in this proceeding to December 31, 2020 to accommodate those issues, and other issues that arise this year that are not resolved by the Wildfire Safety Division.

1. Background

Public Utilities Code (Pub. Util. Code) Section 1701.5(a) provides that the Commission shall resolve the issues raised in the scoping memo of a ratesetting proceeding within 18 months of the date the proceeding is initiated, unless the Commission makes a written determination that the deadline cannot be met, and issues an order extending the deadline. In this proceeding, the initial 18-month statutory deadline for resolving this rulemaking is April 25, 2020.

On October 25, 2018, the California Public Utilities Commission initiated this Order Instituting Rulemaking to review Wildfire Mitigation Plans. After several rounds of comments, workshops, review and discovery, the Commission approved, with conditions, Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMP) of Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, and San Diego Gas & Electric Company, PacifiCorp, Bear Valley Electric Service, Liberty Utilities, Trans Bay Cable LLC and NextEra Energy Transmission West, LLC., now known as Horizon West Transmission LLC.

Several issues remained open for consideration in Phase 2 of this proceeding, including in-language community outreach before, during and after a wildfire, adoption of metrics that will be used in the future to evaluate the effectiveness of the WMPs, and evaluation of the 2019 WMPs. Decision (D.) 20-03-004 addressed in-language community outreach before, during and after a wildfire.

Because Assembly Bill (AB) 1054 moved responsibilities to the Commission's Wildfire Safety Division, D.20-03-004 also explained what tasks would be handled by Wildfire Safety Division, including review of the 2020

WMPs submitted on February 7, 2020 with input from the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board¹ due in April and May 2020, but the formal proceeding should remain open to address policy issues the Wildfire Safety Division will not address, issues that arise this year during wildfire season, and the issues described in the Summary section above.

Therefore, an extension of the statutory deadline until December 31, 2020 is appropriate.

2. Waiver of Comment Period

Under Rule 14.6(c)(4) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Commission may reduce or waive the period for public review and comment of proposed decisions extending the deadline for resolving ratesetting proceedings. Accordingly, the otherwise applicable period for public review and comment is being waived.

3. Assignment of Proceeding

Marybel Batjer is the assigned Commissioner and Sarah R. Thomas is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. On October 25, 2018, the Commission initiated this OIR.
2. The statutory deadline for resolving the issues identified in the scoping memos is April 25, 2020.

¹ In addition to providing input on the contents of the 2020 WMPs, the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board will provide input on WMP requirements in addition to those mandated by AB 1054, wildfire safety and mitigation performance metrics for evaluating the WMPs, and electrical corporation compliance with approved WMPs.

3. The Commission has additional issues to address for the 2020 wildfire season, including consideration of input from the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board due later this year, decision-making on metrics to assess the effectiveness of the electrical corporations' wildfire mitigation, the contents of in-language community outreach before, during and after a wildfire, and other issues that may arise during the 2020 wildfire season.

Conclusion of Law

Pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under Pub. Util. Code § 1701.5(a), the statutory deadline should be extended to December 31, 2020.

IT IS ORDERED that the statutory deadline in this proceeding is extended until December 31, 2020.

This order is effective today.

Dated April 16, 2020, at San Francisco, California.

MARYBEL BATJER

President

LIANE M. RANDOLPH

MARTHA GUZMAN ACEVES

CLIFFORD RECHTSCHAFFEN

GENEVIEVE SHIROMA

Commissioners